

REMARKS

Status of Claims

Claims 15-18, 20 and 24-25 are pending.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter of claims 22 and 23, if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 15, 20 and 25 have been amended to correct informalities in claim language and to more clearly define the present subject matter. Claims 15 and 20 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 22 and 23 respectively. Since no new consideration or no new matter requiring a new search has been introduced, entry of this amendment is respectfully solicited.

Patentability under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 15-18 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Koike et al. (US 2003/0022028) in view of D'Evelyn et al. (US 2005/0087753). Claims 20 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Koike et al. in view of Sakano et al. (US 2003/0080341). These rejections are traversed for at least the following reasons.

Since claims 15 and 20 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 22 and 23 respectively, amended claims 15 and 20 and all claims dependent thereon are patentable over the cited references. Thus, it is requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103.

CONCLUSION

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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